



## Project Devote Update



**Winnipeg -- July 13, 2012** – On Thursday, July 12, members of Project Devote, a joint RCMP and Winnipeg Police Service team, provided an overview of their work to date at a special gathering for families of some of Manitoba's murdered and missing women.

In May, Project Devote accepted an invitation to the *Wiping Away the Tears* family gathering organized by the Manitoba government's Special Advisor on Aboriginal Women's Issues. Project Devote made a commitment to share this information with families first, at this event, as planned, prior to releasing any information publicly.

The presentation provided an overview of the work to date that has been done by the Manitoba Integrated Task Force for Murdered and Missing Women and the ongoing investigative work of Project Devote.

### **Manitoba Integrated Task Force for Murdered and Missing Women: August 2009-May 2011**

In its initial phase, the Task Force had identified for review 84 investigations in Manitoba involving unsolved female homicides and missing women investigations where foul play was suspected.

The Task Force identified 28 investigations dating back to 1961 for intense review: 8 missing persons and 20 homicides. To identify investigations that would most likely provide linkages, each of the 28 investigations involved victims who were at high or extreme risk to become a victim of violent crime.

The Task Force's mandate was the analysis of investigational information to determine what, if any, linkages existed, and to determine appropriate avenues for follow-up investigation.

The team aligned their reporting and tracking systems into a consistent information system so that it was stored, organized and available for comparison to identify any possible linkages.

Identifying and recording more than 27,000 entities, such as persons, addresses, phone numbers and vehicle descriptors, was another extensive, detailed task necessary to allow comparisons against each investigation.

Comparison and analysis of investigational entities, DNA analysis, behavioural markers and investigational review findings were then conducted to determine if linkages exist.

The Task Force employed a number of available national resources, including the RCMP's Behavioral Sciences Branch in Ottawa and the Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System (ViCLAS) centre. The Behavioral Sciences Branch members are criminal profilers who analyze and compare offender behaviour based on crime scene information and physical evidence. Each investigation was also reviewed by the Provincial Violent Crime Linkage Analysis System centre in Manitoba (ViCLAS) to compare offender behavior, clothing, physical descriptors and information contained in victim statements in an effort to identify and link offenders.

The Task Force's review provided investigative leads for the subsequent phase: Project Devote.

### **Project Devote: May 2011**

In May 2011, Project Devote was announced as an investigative team to move forward with the recommendations made by the Manitoba Integrated Task Force for Murdered and Missing Women.

The existing nine Task Force police personnel were nearly tripled with the addition of 15 people. Project Devote is comprised of 18 police officers (10 WPS and 8 RCMP), two RCMP civilian member analysts, three RCMP data entry personnel and one RCMP administrative support person.

The team has a wide range of experience, including homicide investigators and members from the WPS Historical Case Unit, Street Crime Unit, RCMP Major Crimes Unit, WPS Vice Unit, WPS Sex Crimes Unit, WPS Child Abuse Unit and WPS Missing Persons Unit.

In addition to the 84 investigations of missing and murdered women reviewed by the Task Force, 112 investigations involving male victims were reviewed by Project Devote; however, only one of these fit the scope of Project Devote.

Project Devote will concentrate on the 28 investigations of unsolved homicides and missing persons where foul play is suspected, involving exploited and at risk persons.

At this point, there is no physical evidence to indicate that one person is responsible for more than one of these homicides. However, there is a continuous assessment of investigational information to determine if linkages exist. Project Devote is working with several agencies across the country in this regard.

In our ongoing efforts to communicate with families, team members have personally contacted a family representative of all 28 victims to advise them that the investigations are now under the responsibility of Project Devote.

While many family members are located in Winnipeg, Project Devote members also travelled to a number of communities across Manitoba, from Swan River to as far north as God's River. Investigators also contacted family representatives in British Columbia and Ontario.

The remaining 56 investigations that did not fall within the scope of Project Devote continue to be investigated by the police service of jurisdiction, which personally notified and updated family representatives.

Project Devote recognizes the need and importance of regular contact with family members. A full-time Manitoba Justice Victim Services Family Liaison is now working with Project Devote to provide information, support services and referrals to community agencies that can help assist families whose loved ones have been murdered or are missing.

Project Devote is now responsible for the investigation of the disappearance or homicide of the following 28 victims:

Jean Mocharski (age 43)

Debra Richardson (age 17)

Marie Banks (age 18)

Constance Cameron (age 24)

Cheryl Duck (age 15)

Charlene Orsuluk (age 17)

Cathy Williams (age 21)

Susan Holens (age 15)

Glenda Morrisseau (age 19)

Jamie McGuire (age 20)

William Weinbender (age 46)

Evelyn Stewart (age 25)

Tania Marsden (age 18)

Noreen Taylor (age 32)

Therena Silva (age 35)

Felicia Solomon (age 16)

Nicolle Hands (age 31)

Sylvia Guiboche (age 20)

Irma Murdock (age 32)

Sunshine Wood (age 16)

Cynthia Audy (age 27)

Tatia Ulm (age 39)

Myrna Letandre (age 36)

Fonassa Bruyere (age 17)

Crystal Saunders (age 24)

Claudette Osborne (age 21)

Cherisse Houle (age 17)

Hillary Wilson (age 18)

Project Devote remains steadfastly committed to the victims, their families and communities.

Project Devote has established a dedicated tip line and encourages anyone with information to contact:

**Project Devote Tip Line at 1-888-673-3316**

-30-

For further information contact:

Cpl. Miles Hiebert  
RCMP Media Relations  
Tel: (204) 983-8497

Patrol Sgt. Monica Stothers,  
Public Information Officer  
Tel: (204) 986-3061

Miles.C.Hiebert@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

WPS-PIO@Winnipeg.ca